

По словам исследователя современного славянского неоязычества А. Бескова, «неоязычество – это следствие демократических преобразований и претворения в жизнь принципа свободы совести. Проще говоря, вера в языческих богов явно проявилась тогда, когда за нее перестали преследовать» [4, с. 111].

Рассмотрев конкретно-исторические условия возникновения неоязычества с 50-х гг. XX в. по XXI в., мы пришли к следующим выводам:

1. Сложные исторические реалии России XX в., особенно его конца, стимулировали интерес к религии, неоязычеству.

2. Повышенный интерес в позднесоветское время и 90-е гг. XX в. к неоязычеству можно объяснить следующими причинами: кризисом идентичности позднесоветского человека и возросшим интересом к национальной культуре (поиск корней и национальной идеологии); осознание экологического и социального кризиса; противопоставление христианству (как чуждой и «навязанной» религии) и коммунизму.

3. Вовлеченность граждан в политические процессы стимулировала политизацию религиозной сферы. Неоязычество стало удобным вариантом подобной политизации религии.

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CHRISTIANITY IN SYRIA

Abstract. In this paper the author discusses the importance of Syria; the land of Civilizations and the Cradle of Christianity. An overview on Syria's Christian history and heritage is provided. The author explores how Syrian cities were the starting point for Christian missionaries to the world, a home for the ancient cathedrals and churches. The author concludes by focusing on the Christian practices in Syria.

Keywords: christianity, Syria, christians, religion, politics, social sphere.

Introduction

Syria, located on the shores of the Mediterranean and known as the cradle of civilizations, has been well characterized by its harmonica religious diversity, which is rarely seen in other countries [3]. Being a home for the three monotheistic religions, Syria has shaped an extraordinary example of a multicultural and multireligious melting pot, where people, temples, shrines, traditions and rituals are mixed as mosaic piece of art.

One of these artistic pieces of Syria's mosaic is Christianity and Christians who are considered one the pillars of Syria, Syrian society and state. Christianity existed in Syrian since the first century, as Christians have been playing a major role in Syrian social and political spheres alike, since the ancient times.

Christianity is seen as an integral part of the country's history and status quo. Historically speaking, Christianity was spread into Syriac rites (also called Orthodox or Eastern Orthodox) and Byzantium (Roman Catholic or Western Christian), whereas the Syriacs differ from Byzantium in traditional ceremonies and traditions. The Christians of Syria diverse and are categorized in different branches like the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Maronites, Latins, Protestants, Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics, and Armenians [7].

The entry of Christianity into Syria dates back to the first and second centuries AD. Initially, the Christian vocation based in Palestine was totally incompatible with the prevailing mentality back then in Syria, which was subjected to the Romans since 64 BC. However, Christianity was calling for the abandonment of state; Worshiping

the emperor and calling for worshipping the one God who created everything, taking love, peace and equality among human beings as the moral principles that regulate the social spheres of others [3].

In 106 CE, Trajan captured the Nabataean kingdom and transformed it into a Roman state called "Arab" and its base was Busra. The Christian missionary began with Christians of Jewish origin that fled Palestine as a result of the war with the Romans. In the first and second centuries AD, the number of Christian increased and the preachers spread Christianity in many regions. The most famous of those preachers was St. Paul, who established the roots of Christianity in Türe (Damascus and Homs at the time). St. Paul spread Christianity in Latakia, the very issue that make Syria the base of Paul missionary to Europe, Americans and hence the world [3]. In Damascus, people still can visit the church of St. Paul which was his starting point to Christianise Europe and the western world. The church is located in Bab Kisan (The Gate of Kisan), which one of the seven ancient city-gates of Damascus, located in the southeastern part of Damascus Old City.

However, one of the factors that eased the spread of Christianity was the existence of the Jewish communities in Syria. According to the Jewish historian Filafious Joseph, Jews of Syria were estimated by more than 50.000. This issue created a base for the Christians to convert others to Christianity and become the dominate religion in Syria after Judaism [4], until the arrival of Arabs and Islam to the region during the 11th century, that exposed the numbers of Christians to a rapid change, until the present day. It must be taking into consideration that there is no official numbers of Christians, Muslims or Jews in Syria, especially taking into account the huge fluxes of Syrians abroad, since the 19th century up to this day. Nevertheless, despite all the invasions that Syria had to confront from different leaders, countries and empires, Christians and Christianity have been the basic pillar of Syria and all Syrian cities.

The Syrian Christian Heritage

Syria is considered one the first countries with the first traces of Christianity in the world. For example, the first church building in the world, Dura-Europos church in Syria, has been the oldest surviving church building in the world. It is located above the right bank of the Euphrates River, near the village of Salhiyé in Syria. Dura-Europos was a Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman border city as an easternmost stronghold in Mesopotamia, until it was captured by Sassanians in 256 – 57 AD [5].

Another important Christian trace in Syria is presented in the Saint Mary Church of the Holy Belt, which is a historical Syriac Orthodox Church in Homs city in Syria. The church is built over an underground church dating back to 50 AD. The importance of this Church is embodied in the venerated Holy Girdle that is supposed to be a section of the belt of Mary, mother of Jesus [1]. Moreover, some of the most important traces of early history of Christianity in Syria are seen in the Church of the Forty Martyrs that was built in ancient times, and located in Aleppo. It is significant among the Armenian churches for being one of the oldest active churches in the Armenian diaspora in the city of Aleppo.

Moreover, the monastery and church of Mar Elian el-Homsi is an ancient archaeological church located in Homs in the centre of Syria and dates back to 432 AD. It contains the remains of St. Elian Homsi, the Christian saint who was killed during the Roman persecutions in the third century [2].

Furthermore, the Church of St. John the Baptist associated with the 16th century is one of the best examples that can summarize the social, political, cultural and religious reality of Syrian, now and then. The story goes back to Damascus, the capital of Syria, the oldest continually inhabited city in the world, according the UNESCO World Heritage [7]. The city of Damascus is divided into two distinct sections, one of which is Old Damascus and the other the New Damascus. Old Damascus is distinguished with its monuments, houses, ancient allies, underground churches, like Hanania Church which is connected with the Grand Mosque via a tunnel. The Grand Mosque, since the arrival of Muslims to Syria, has been the fourth most important site for Muslims around the world. The Grand mosque, however, was the site of the Aramean temple of Aram, god of thunder and fertility in the beginning of the first millennium BC. Then, the Romans replaced the Aram temple with the name of the god "Jupiter Damascene" in the third century AD, the very place that was changed later by the Christian Byzantines who established a church for the "St. John the Baptist" in the same place in the late fourth century AD. Currently, all the traces of this temple can be seen, examined and visited in the Grand Mosque that was changed to this name by the Umayyad Muslims in 705 AD.

To put in different words, the role of Syria and its importance for the Christian religion, Judaism and Islam has been never limited only to history. On one hand, Damascus, for instance, has been the seat of three churches of great importance to Christians, namely the Patriarchate of Antioch and the rest of the East for the Greek Orthodox, the East of the Syriac Orthodox, the Patriarchate of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria of the Melkite Catholics. On the other hand, Aleppo is the only city in the world with 11 Christian communities, each with its own Patriarch and its own personal spiritual courts. Each of these Christian divisions has their own representatives and courts as follows: Evangelical community, The Greek Orthodox Church, Roman Catholics, Armenian Orthodox community, Armenian Catholic community, Syriac Catholics, Syrian Orthodox Church, The Maronite community, Chaldean community, in addition to other Christian denominations in such as the Latin community, the Armenian Evangelical community,

the Jesuit Monasticism, the Maronite Aleppine Monasticism, the Maronite Antonine Aleppines, the Bismarckian Armenian Monasticism, and the Basile Albanian Monasticism [6].

Syrian Christians: Demography and Social Status

Christians exist and spread on all the map and land of Syria which is made of fourteen cities (provinces). Syrian Christians have been living in every Syrian city, town, village, neighbourhood and street. In fact, one of the biggest and first Christian communities in Syria have been based in the East and Eastern South of Syria in the cities of Hasaka, Qamishli, Raqqa, Derezor, and Homs, in addition to the other big cities of Syria like Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Damascus and Aleppo.

Christians have been living in the Syrian society like all other sects and religions that existed and came later to Syria. Syrian Christians practice all their religious rites, rituals and traditions freely and publically, without any restrictions. They are part of Syrian society with the Jewish, Muslim and non-Muslim communities, who, in the matter of fact, participate in Christian festivals and holidays in every Syria city, either by setting Christmas trees and decorations, or by taking part in Easter's traditions via colouring eggs or by engaging in the Christian festivals that occur in all Syria publically like in Christmas, Easter, Day of Virgin Mary, Feast of the Cross, Marmarita Festival, Saint Barbara's day etc.

Language

Christian people and churches use Semitic Arabic as the language of communication, rituals and ceremonies, in addition to the use of Aramaic, which is the language of Jesus Christ that is still used as a means of communication in different cities in Syria, like in Maloula. Other churches and communities use Syriac language as the language of rituals and communication, where Armenians are still using the Armenian language, in parallel with the Syrian Arabic in their daily lives and ceremonial rituals [3]. However, most of the religious Syrian Christians know Latin and Greek languages, since they are both connected with reading texts from the Bible.

The Role of Christians in Syrian Society

Christians have played an important role in the Syrian society since the ancient times, as they have been a great weight in various stages of the Syria's history. In the last century, several Christian personalities emerged, including Fares al-Khoury, who was born in 1877 in Damascus, and died in 1962. He was a Syrian politician and thinker. He founded with his colleagues the Institute of Arab Rights. He also contributed to the establishment of the Arab Scientific Academy in Damascus. He was the minister of Finance during the period of the Syrian Kingdom, which is first independent state after the end of the Ottoman occupation of Syria. Faris al-Khoury, in cooperation with other Syrian personalities, founded the People's Party in response to the tyranny of the French authorities during the French Mandate in Syria. Al-Khoury served twice as Speaker of the House of Representatives and also assumed the presidency of the Council of Ministers in 1944 [6].

Another important figure in Syria's history was Michel Aflaq, the political philosopher who was born in Damascus in 1910, and died in 1989. He had the largest and most important role in establishing the Baath party, hence establishing the secular Syria that stays still until the present day among the Arab and Islamic neighbouring Monarchies and regimes. Michel Aflaq, the Christian orthodox, became the Minister of Education in Adib al-Shshakli's government, and he was the trigger and the reason of the unity between Syria and Egypt between 1958 and 1971.

Moreover, one of the most famous Syria Christian figures were Constantine Zureik, the historian and politician and Joul Jammal, one of the most prominent figures in Syria, a Christian Orthodox, who died in an operation against the French destroyer "Jean Bar" which was heading towards Egypt in the days of the tripartite aggression in 1956 [6].

In brief, to cover all the prominent Christians and public figures in Syria, their role and contributions to Syria, might be an endless mission to be done in this paper, but, to finish with one of the current prominent Christians in Syria, I feel obliged to mention Basel Kas Nasrallah, the only case in the world, the western and eastern alike, where a Christian man has been operating as the advisor and counsellor of the Muslims' Grand Mufti in Syria. This case reveals the truth about Syria's ideology and society, where coexistence and harmony are not used as mottos and slogans, but, they reflect the core and deep nature of Syria, now and then, on daily basis.

Conclusion

In the end, the Christians of Syria are Syrians before they are Christians. They are one of the many pieces of the Syrian mosaic, one of the components of the different Syrian people. Syrian Christians are an integral part of the Syrian society and the entity of the Syrian state. They are a main part of the Syrian ancient history, and an essential part of Syrian promising future. Syrian Christians are the mirror that reflects the lessons from the past, the setbacks of the present, and the future of Syrian nation; the secular, the civil and the modern.

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САКРАЛЬНАЯ ЭКОНОМИКА МИНЕРАЛЬНЫХ РЕСУРСОВ ЮЖНОЙ СИБИРИ

Аннотация. Статья посвящена взаимосвязи «человек-ландшафт-сакральные акторы-добыча минеральных ресурсов». Показана разница в подходе добывающих компаний и местных жителей, считающих, что натуральные богатства принадлежат богам, как одним из акторов глобальной экономики.

Ключевые слова: сакральная экономика, сакральность ресурсов, Южная Сибирь, Бурятия, добыча минеральных ресурсов

Взгляд добывающих компаний, как частных, так и государственных, основан на прагматике использования недр земли. Минеральные ресурсы здесь не что иное, как абстракция, которая должна превратиться в монетаризированное богатство индивидов, их добывающих. Прагматика инвестиции рабочей силы, необходимой технической базы должна обернуться капиталом, пройдя все необходимые стадии. На этом отношения с землей, по сути, заканчиваются. Пространство наполнено только одним смыслом – капиталом, а минеральные ресурсы – средство реализации этого смысла.

Местное население, совершенно иначе смотрит на, казалось бы, один и тот же процесс. Локальный взгляд на минеральные ресурсы, их добычу и дальнейшее использование имеет сакральную природу: ресурсы принадлежат божествам и духам гор, которые позволяют или не позволяют человеку их добывать. Такое представление реализуется в сложной системе социальной иерархии и реципрокальных отношениях, где важнейшими акторами являются истинные владельцы минералов – боги. Поскольку именно боги решают, что открывать, что отдавать людям из их сокровищницы взамен на жертвоприношения и почтение, а также боги решают, кого карать за нарушение установленных ими законов и воровство их богатства, то богам нужно уметь нравиться, с ними нужно уметь договариваться. Поскольку минералы – часть не пассивных недр, но действующего и одухотворенного ландшафта, то сакральны не только сами их хозяева, но и сами минералы. Так, например, нефрит является сакральным камнем у бурят и сойотов. Для сойотов нефрит представляет собой не только традиционно-культурную сакральность, но еще и политическую.

Так, в 2006 г. сойоты были признаны коренным малочисленным народом Севера и внесены в государственный реестр с последующими закреплениями за ними различных льгот, легитимных для всех коренных и малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока. Будучи признанными как «этнос», сойоты должны были представить ряд черт, которые подтверждали и воспроизводили бы их новый статус. Одним из таких признаков стал нефрит, обращенный в камень – визитную карточку для государства и внешней аудитории. Таким образом, нефрит умножил свою сакральность для молодого «этноса»: он превратился в культурный и символический капитал, выражаясь неомарксистским языком социолога Пьера Бурдьё [1].

Локальное микро-производство различных изделий из нефрита не только транспортирует идею сакральности минерала, подчеркивая его историко-культурную значимость, но еще и утверждает идентичность, рожденную на пересечении сакрального и экономического измерений, которые все более устойчиво встраиваются и находят свои ниши в современной экономике этнотуризма. Культурная коммодификация региона, таким образом, основывается на минерале, аккумулирующем в себе целый комплекс разнообразных и неоднозначных интерпретаций.

Сакральность ресурсов проявляется в локальных нарративах о чудесных столкновениях (иногда пугающих, иногда намекающих на неверное поведение в местах скопления минералов) с истинными владельцами богатств земли. Так, существуют истории о «красном песке», который является оберегом, если найти его на сакральном месте. Считается, что песок передают людям божества гор, которые решают кто достоин такого ценного подарка. По представлениям местных жителей, если этим песком обсыпать по периметру стены дома, то пожар, воровство и другие несчастья не будут угрожать его жителям.

Сакральность также отражается и на социальной структуре локального сообщества. Исторически мастера, связанные с металлом делились на две подгруппы кузнецов: белых и черных. Белые кузнецы работали с золотом и серебром, а черные с обычным металлом и изготавливали не ювелирные, а практические изделия, такие как оружие, подковы для лошадей и иные предметы для бытового использования. Обе эти группы нарративно относились к категории, тех, кто способен вступать в диалог с богами и духами гор. У людей этих